

A civil society review of progress  
towards the Millennium Development  
Goals in Commonwealth countries

National Report:

# Ghana



Commonwealth  
Foundation



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## A civil society review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Commonwealth countries

# National Report: Ghana

This project aims to encourage and articulate civil society analysis of: progress towards the MDGs; the usefulness of the MDG framework for civil society; the contribution of civil society to the attainment of the MDGs; issues for a post-2015 agenda to consider.

This report documents the outputs of a two-stage process: desk research to review UN, government, civil society and other multilateral reports on national progress towards achieving the MDGs; and a national consultation workshop with civil society, which tested the findings of the desk research and enabled a deeper discussion on MDG progress, utility and post-2015 agenda setting.

This project was undertaken as part of a programme with the UN Millennium Campaign (UNMC), which supported country-level research by civil society organisations in 20 countries.

The Commonwealth Foundation led this process for the following 14 countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Grenada, Jamaica, Malawi, New Zealand, Pakistan, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Zambia. The UNMC led in the following six countries: India, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines and The Gambia.

## Commonwealth Foundation

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The Commonwealth Foundation is a development organisation with an international remit and reach, uniquely situated at the interface between government and civil society. We develop the capacity of civil society to act together and learn from each other to engage with the institutions that shape people's lives. We strive for more effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation, which contributes to improved development outcomes.

## UN Millennium Campaign

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The UN Millennium Campaign was established by the UN Secretary General in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens' efforts to hold their governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by 189 world leaders from rich and poor countries, as part of the Millennium Declaration which was signed in 2000. These leaders agreed to achieve the Goals by 2015. Our premise is simple: we are the first generation that can end poverty and we refuse to miss this opportunity.

# Executive Summary

## Project rationale and process

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This summary presents perspectives from civil society in Ghana on progress made and challenges experienced in relation to the national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the extent to which MDG processes have provided opportunities to enhance participatory governance and civil society relations with government. Based on their reflections, Ghanaian civil society organisations (CSOs) made a number of recommendations to accelerate progress on the MDGs and improve future development frameworks.

For this review, in the first half of 2012, the Ghana Integrity Institute conducted interviews with key informants, held focus group discussions and reviewed assessments made by government, CSOs, UN agencies and donors on MDG progress. The Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD) and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation then convened a national consultation in December 2012 to verify and augment the research and make additional recommendations.

## Civil society review of the MDGs in Ghana

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CSOs see a mixed picture of progress on the MDGs. They consider that Goal 2 will be achieved and Goal 1 is likely to be achieved by 2015, while there has been significant progress on Goal 3, but all its targets may not be met. CSOs consider that it is unlikely that Goals 4 and 5 will be achieved by 2015 and that there has been a mixture of progression and regression on Goal 7. They assess Goal 8 as off track and Goal 6 as having regressed. CSOs point out that national headline figures mask considerable geographical inequalities, with Ghana's three northern regions remaining the country's poorest areas; many communities and districts in these regions in particular are lagging in relation to poverty levels and access to services.

CSOs report that they have found the MDG framework useful partly as a common reference point to bring together different actors. The MDGs have for some time existed alongside Ghana's national development frameworks, but an aspect of the added value of the MDGs is their status as a global agreement on which the government seeks to demonstrate it is making progress.

Part of the civil society response to the MDGs has been the formation of new CSO coalitions, such as the Ghana Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs, which has the objective of building Ghanaian citizens' capacity to hold government accountable for the delivery of the MDGs. There is also considerable CSO

presence on national level committees that work on thematic aspects of the MDGs. For instance, in the health sector, there is a strong CSO presence in meetings and committees, although there remains the challenge of CSOs having the necessary capacity to make the most of the space and the opportunities for making an input. CSOs still face challenges in their capacity to undertake policy advocacy, although they believe there have been some recent improvements.

CSOs consider that participation in MDG processes has helped to build their legitimacy, and that the MDGs have provided a platform for enhanced engagement with government and international organisations. The latter are seen as useful for stimulating co-operation and funding. CSOs feel, however, that donor funding can drive the civil society agenda, compelling CSOs to focus on funding agencies' priority areas, risking neglect of important issues that fall outside immediate donor priorities. CSOs also fear loss of donor support as the result of the economic crisis in Europe and Ghana's attainment of middle-income status.

One area of apparent donor reluctance reported by CSOs is in the provision of sufficient funding to enable CSOs to play their monitoring role to its full extent. Other identified barriers to CSOs exercising oversight include lack of a right to information legislation and delayed, out-dated and highly aggregated data.

In looking to the future, CSOs involved in this review see a need for continuing work even after targets are achieved, as most targets, even if attained, leave room for improvement. They also believe that continuing interventions are needed to ensure that achievements are not reversed. For these reasons, and because they believe some headway has been made in raising awareness about the MDGs (although they acknowledge a need to improve media engagement), some CSOs caution against the adoption of new frameworks and accompanying new jargon to supplant the current MDGs. Regardless of which goals are decided upon, CSOs suggest that to accelerate progress will need stronger accountability and greater focus on addressing regional imbalances within Ghana.

## Recommendations

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Among civil society recommendations to accelerate progress are:

- Strengthen CSOs' capacity to understand and identify the most effective policies, entry points and interventions to increase progress towards the MDGs; bolster their capacity to undertake research; and further strengthen coalitions for stronger co-ordination between CSOs.
- Alongside donor support for civil society, government support is needed, through an independent funding mechanism specifically for CSOs working on the MDGs. This would help bring about more effective civil society engagement on the MDGs, and would strengthen partnership between CSOs and the government.
- Attention needs to be paid to the enabling environment for civil society. A right to information law is needed to help monitoring, evidence-based advocacy and constructive participation in development planning.
- Related to this, data should be brought up to date and released more quickly so that they can more realistically reflect what is happening in communities and guide interventions and oversight better. There is also a need for more disaggregated data.

Key civil society recommendations for shaping a future development framework include:

- A greater focus on equity issues, and new indicators to measure progress in infrastructural development.
- Processes towards development goals should complement those that address governance gaps.
- There is a need for stronger sub-national structures, including district assemblies, that can play a bigger role, and for the representation of women in these to be strengthened.

## 1. Introduction

This report presents perspectives from civil society in Ghana on progress made and challenges experienced with the MDGs, and the extent to which MDG processes have provided opportunities to enhance participatory governance and civil society relations with government. For this review, in the first half of 2012, the Ghana Integrity Institute conducted interviews with key informants, held focus group discussions and reviewed assessments made by government, CSOs, UN agencies and donors on MDG progress. The Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD) and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation then convened a national consultation in December 2012 to verify and augment the research, and make additional recommendations.

It is important at the outset to understand that the MDGs supply only part of the development context in Ghana. When Ghana accessed limited financial assistance under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative in 2001, the government was required to prepare a Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I, 2003–2005, followed by GPRS II, 2006–2009 and its successor, Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA), 2010–2013). GPRS I and II focused on production and gainful employment, human resource development and basic services, special programmes for the poor and vulnerable, and governance. Clearly, these themes have overlapped considerably with the MDGs, and since 2002 the government has made conscious efforts to integrate the MDGs into these national frameworks. The annual progress reports on these have since 2004 had sections addressing progress towards the MDGs. However, while there appears to have been a reasonable level of integration, this serves as a reminder that is not always helpful to look at the MDGs in isolation.

The national development strategies aimed at doubling the size of the economy over a decade and bringing average per capita income to middle-income country level by 2015. During the period from 2000 to date, Ghana has benefited from a range of international development assistance support, such as the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS) and the US-funded Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) programme, which has helped Ghana in its development efforts as a whole and to make progress on the MDGs. Programmes include interventions in basic education such as the School Feeding Programme<sup>1</sup> and the Capitation Grant,<sup>2</sup> teacher training and education, public health care, poverty-focused agriculture, rural water and sanitation, transport, rural electrification and cash transfers<sup>3</sup> to poor households. However, commentaries by civil society advocacy groups such as the Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA) of the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) have critiqued some of these mechanisms for compelling Ghana to implement harsh policies, as part of donor conditionalities, that may have worsened the plight of the poor.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The School Feeding Programme is an initiative that provides children from deprived communities with one nutritious meal a day, usually in the afternoon. The initiative is believed to have led to an increase in enrolment rates in basic schools

<sup>2</sup> The Capitation Grant initiative provides funds to basic schools to meet expenditures for which parents were being charged. It is based on school enrolment and is currently 4.50 Ghanaian cedi (approximately US\$2.37) per child

<sup>3</sup> Cash transfers are made to poor households in deprived communities under the Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme. This was recently increased from 12 Ghanaian cedi (approximately US\$6.31) to 36 Ghanaian Cedi (US\$18.94) per qualified household

<sup>4</sup> See for example 'Group cautions Ghana on removal of fuel subsidies proposed by IMF', Ghana Oil Watch, 2012 <http://ghanaoilwatch1.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/group-cautions-ghana-on-removal-of-fuel.html>



5 Ghana: Joint IMF and World Bank Debt Sustainability Analysis, International Monetary Fund, November 2011

6 Ghana has only recently started to export oil, and has faced ongoing energy problems since the mid-1990s, with challenges including hydro-electric plants failing due to drought. In 2006/07 the country experienced an energy crisis, resulting in load-shedding and outages. The government tried to install generators to improve the situation, but these were expensive and inefficient. Source: *The Energy Crisis and Growth Performance of the Economy*, Centre for Policy Analysis, No. 15, 2007

7 According to the OECD, aid from major donors to developing countries fell by nearly 3 per cent in 2011, breaking a long trend of annual increases. Source: 'Development: Aid to Developing Countries Falls Because of Global Recession', OECD, April 2012, <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/developmentaidtodevelopingcountriesfallsbecaus eofglobalrecession.htm>

8 Transparency International recently adjusted the scoring to a 0 to 100 scale. Both these scores have been presented on the former zero to 10 scale to enable a comparison

9 Ghana Corruption Perceptions Index 2012, <http://www.transparency.org/country/GHA>

10 Corruption Perceptions Index 2005, Transparency International, [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2005](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005)

11 The 'Voice of the People' (a national survey of corruption in Ghana): act now against corruption in Ghana, Ghana Integrity Initiative is the Ghana chapter of Transparency International

12 Unless otherwise stated, the government assessments, quantitative data, targets and indicators in Table 1 are drawn from the *Ghana Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2010*. Data for this report were sourced in 2008, so in some places more up-to-date data from alternative sources have been used. Unless otherwise stated, the deadline for goals to be achieved is 2015

13 Henri Leturque and Steve Wiggins, *Ghana's Story: Ghana's Sustained Agricultural Growth: Putting Underused Resources to Work*, Development in Progress series, Overseas Development Institute, 2010

14 *Ghana, Aid Effectiveness 2011: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration*, Vol. II. Country Chapters, OECD, 2011

Recent economic growth in Ghana has been strong, rising from 4 per cent in 2009 to an estimated 13.5 per cent in 2011, boosted by commercial oil production which began in 2010, and expansion of the non-oil economy. This growth combined with a fall in inflation, which dropped to single digits from its peak of more than 20 per cent in June 2009.<sup>5</sup> However, while progress has undoubtedly been made, Ghana remains highly vulnerable to external shocks such as rising crude oil prices and accompanying energy crises,<sup>6</sup> as well as the impact of the global financial crisis, which has caused many donor countries to reduce their support to poor and less developed countries.<sup>7</sup>

Another serious challenge to Ghana's progress towards the MDGs is felt to be poor governance and corruption. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, which scored countries on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean)<sup>8</sup> on the basis of perceptions of corruption, gave Ghana a score of 4.5, and ranked it 64 out of 176 countries in 2012.<sup>9</sup> This suggests a slight improvement, as its score was 3.5 in 2005,<sup>10</sup> but clearly there is room for further progress. In addition, various surveys on corruption, such as the Ghana Integrity Initiative's (GII) Voice of the People Survey, have reported that corruption is a serious problem.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Civil society perspectives on progress towards the MDGs

**Table 1: Civil society assessment of progress towards the MDGs**

Goals, targets and indicators <sup>12</sup>	Civil society assessment of progress	Government assessment of progress	Civil society perspectives on challenges
<p>Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:</p> <p>1a. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day</p> <p>1b. Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p> <p>1c. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p>	Likely to be achieved	Largely on track, likely to be surpassed	<p>In 2010, many believed that Ghana would be the first sub-Saharan African country to achieve Goal 1,<sup>13</sup> which would require it to halve the incidence of poverty from 51.7 per cent in 1990 to 25.85 per cent by 2015. The 2010 MDGs Report for Ghana states that this is on track, and this is supported by the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 5). In 2011 around 30 per cent of the population, over seven million people, were estimated to live under the income poverty line of US\$1.25 a day.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>This section is continued overleaf</p>

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Goals, targets and indicators	Civil society assessment of progress	Government assessment of progress	Civil society perspectives on challenges
<p>Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:</p> <p>1a. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day</p> <p>1b. Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p> <p>1c. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p>	Likely to be achieved	Largely on track, likely to be surpassed	<p>Ghana's overall poverty rate declined dramatically, from 51.7 per cent in 1991 to 28.5 per cent in 2006. According to a World Bank report,<sup>15</sup> this was complemented by a significant increase of about 35.5 per cent in real consumption per adult household equivalent by 2005/06.<sup>16</sup> If there was no relapse, the MDG goal could be surpassed.</p> <p>However, civil society notes that the poverty headcount has declined more slowly in rural areas, especially in Ghana's three northern regions. The global financial crisis could also adversely affect Ghana's efforts to achieve the MDGs, especially in its search for further funds for MDG-related interventions. The 2009 UN Human Development Report stated that inequality remains high.<sup>17</sup></p>
<p>Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education:</p> <p>2a. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</p>	Will be achieved	Achieved	<p>The abolition of school fees and the provision of subsidies in 2005 had a positive effect on education in Ghana, helping to increase enrolment rates and reduce gender gaps.<sup>18</sup> Net enrolment in primary education rose from 65 per cent in 2000 to 84.2 per cent in 2011, while the completion rate for primary education has also improved significantly, from 71.1 per cent in 2000 to 94 per cent in 2011 (2012 calculations).<sup>19</sup> Women to men parity in literacy rates for ages 15 to 24 rose from 0.86 in 2000 to 0.98 in 2010.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>CSOs draw attention to the need to focus on the quality of education. Further improvements in basic education would require increasing teacher placement and retention in under-served areas, increased access to textbooks and more frequent monitoring of education outcomes through timely Basic Education Completion Examinations (BECE). CSOs also point to regional disparities that need to be addressed.</p>
<p>Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women:</p> <p>3a. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</p>	Significant progress, but all targets may not be met	On track for achievement	<p>Two key indicators are used to monitor progress towards gender parity and women's empowerment: the Gender Parity Index (GPI) and the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament. The GPI at the primary school level increased from 0.93 in 2003/04 to 0.96 in 2006/07, although there was no change the following year.</p> <p>This section is continued opposite</p>

<sup>15</sup> Report No. 40934-GH: *Ghana Meeting the Challenge of Accelerated and Shared Growth, Vol. I: Synthesis*, PREM 4, Africa Region, Country Economic Memorandum, World Bank, 2007

<sup>16</sup> World Bank, 2007, op. cit

<sup>17</sup> UN Human Development Report 2009, *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, United Nations, 2009

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF in Ghana: *Basic Education and Gender Equality*, [www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro\\_GHA\\_MTSP2.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_GHA_MTSP2.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Ghana data series, United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Indicators, <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/data.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> Ghana UN MDG Indicators, op. cit

Goals, targets and indicators	Civil society assessment of progress	Government assessment of progress	Civil society perspectives on challenges
<p>Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women:</p> <p>3a. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</p>	Significant progress, but all targets may not be met	On track for achievement	<p>Again, CSOs note that there are regional disparities and the situation worsens in secondary education, due to factors such as withdrawal by parents and early marriage or pregnancy.</p> <p>The 2008 parliamentary elections saw only 19 women elected to the lower house of parliament, taking 8.3 per cent of seats. This marked a decline from the 2004 election, when women won 10.9 per cent of seats.<sup>21</sup> Despite this regression, four women currently hold high office, including the first female Speaker of Parliament and Chief Justice. This suggests there may be a need for a new indicator to include women's representation in high-level positions.</p>
<p>Goal 4. Reduce child mortality:</p> <p>4a. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</p>	Unlikely to be achieved	Possible to achieve with accelerated interventions	<p>Improvements have been made in child immunisation coverage and nutrition. Under five mortality rates have decreased, albeit slowly, from 122 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 74 per 1,000 in 2010, as have infant mortality rates from 77 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 50 per 1,000 in 2010.<sup>22</sup> There has been increased enrolment under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). There are, however, fears that the rate of progress is too slow.</p> <p>The 2012 GSGDA recommended the following interventions to improve health service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Scaling up the delivery of safe motherhood and child survival interventions to improve child health outcomes and to reach the child and maternal health MDGs</li> <li>– Expanding coverage of the National Health Insurance Scheme, with better targeting of the poor and most needy</li> <li>– Renewing the commitment to HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, with special emphasis on the most at risk groups</li> <li>– Strengthening the Malaria Control Programme to sustain increasing net use by mothers and infants</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 5. Improve maternal health:</p> <p>5a. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio</p> <p>5b. Achieve universal access to reproductive health</p>	Unlikely to be achieved	Possible to be achieved with accelerated intervention	<p>Maternal mortality rates have fallen from 550 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 350 per 100,000 in 2010.<sup>23</sup> This rate of change however suggests that Ghana will not achieve the target of 185 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015.</p> <p>This section is continued overleaf</p>

<sup>21</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in National Parliaments database, 2005 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif311205.htm> and 2009 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif311209.htm>

<sup>22</sup> Ghana statistics, UNICEF, [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html)

<sup>23</sup> Ghana statistics, Maternal mortality ratio per 100 000 live births, UN Millennium Development Goals Indicators, <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=553&crd=288>

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Goals, targets and indicators	Civil society assessment of progress	Government assessment of progress	Civil society perspectives on challenges
<p>Goal 5. Improve maternal health:</p> <p>5a. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio</p> <p>5b. Achieve universal access to reproductive health</p>	Unlikely to be achieved	Possible to be achieved with accelerated intervention	<p>More urgency is needed. The slow progress has been recognised by the government, which declared maternal mortality a 'national emergency' in 2008, and developed an MDG Acceleration Framework – Ghana Action plan, to focus on improving maternal health.<sup>24</sup></p>
<p>Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases:</p> <p>6a. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>6b. Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it</p> <p>6c. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p>	Regression	Stabilisation: will need to sustain efforts in order to meet the target	<p>CSOs feel that the outlook here is worrying. Evidence from the 2009 Sentinel Surveillance Report (SSR), as cited in the Government Progress Report 2010, suggests an increase in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate to 2.9 per cent in 2009 from 2.2 per cent in 2008. According to other figures from UNAIDS, HIV prevalence in Ghana is erratic, increasing and decreasing over the last decade, but has slowly declined from 3.6 per cent in 2003 to 1.5 per cent in 2011.<sup>25</sup> Of concern is the rising rate among pregnant women, up from 1.9 per cent in 2008 to 2.6 per cent in 2009.</p> <p>There is also concern that the Ghana AIDS Commission may be under-funded. The commission, which is largely supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and international donor agencies, has stated that the eurozone crisis has badly affected its funding. The government may have to provide substitute funding to prevent the problem worsening.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>Malaria remains a serious health concern and is regarded as a leading cause of death, particularly for pregnant women and children under five. There is a worrying decrease in vulnerable groups' usage of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs). The rates of net usage by children under five have dropped dramatically from 55.3 per cent in 2007 to 40.5 per cent in 2008, while pregnant women's usage rates have fallen even more from 52.5 per cent in 2007 to 30.2 per cent in 2008. No reasons are given in the government progress report as to why this drop has occurred.</p>
<p>Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability:</p> <p>7a. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>7b. Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</p>	Progress on some targets, others are moving backwards	Mixed progress: on track for improving access to safe water, but critical challenges remain for reversing the loss of environment resources and increasing access to improved sanitation	<p>The proportion of the population that uses improved drinking water increased from 56 per cent in 1990 to 83.8 per cent in 2008. National coverage for improved sanitation increased from 4 per cent in 1993 to 12.4 per cent in 2008, but this means only a small proportion of the public has been reached, and there are large disparities between regions and between urban and rural areas.</p> <p>This section is continued opposite</p>

<sup>24</sup> MDG Acceleration Framework and Country Action Plan, 2011

<sup>25</sup> Ghana Country AIDS Progress Report: January 2010–December 2011, prepared by Ghana AIDS Commission, UNAIDS: Country Profile Reports <http://www.unaids.org/en>

<sup>26</sup> This was disclosed by the Director of Technical Services of the Ghana AIDS Commission, Dr Richard Amenyah, in an interview on 25 June 2012 with Joy News, a local radio station in Accra

Goals, targets and indicators	Civil society assessment of progress	Government assessment of progress	Civil society perspectives on challenges
<p>7c. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> <p>7d. Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	Progress on some targets, others are moving backwards	Mixed progress: on track for improving access to safe water, but critical challenges remain for reversing the loss of environment resources and increasing access to improved sanitation	<p>It would take a five-fold increase in the rate of progress to meet the target by 2015, which is unlikely. CSOs do not believe significant improvements have been made in the lives of people living in slum areas.</p> <p>Deforestation is occurring at an alarming rate: between 1990 and 2005 forest cover decreased from 32.7 per cent to 24.2 per cent.</p>
<p>Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development</p> <p>8a. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system</p> <p>8b. Address the special needs of least developed countries</p> <p>8c. Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing states</p> <p>8d. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries</p> <p>8e. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p> <p>8f. In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications</p>	Off track	Off track	<p>Aid inflows to Ghana appear to have increased, with Official Development Assistance (ODA) rising from US\$1,582 million in 2009 to US\$1,815 million in 2011.<sup>27</sup> However, Ghana has high levels of external debt that outweigh these, estimated at US\$11.23 billion in 2012.<sup>28</sup> There are also civil society criticisms of the quality of aid.<sup>29</sup></p> <p>Since 2003 11 donors have provided pool funding through the multi-donor budget support mechanism, providing just over US\$400 million to the national budget in 2010.<sup>30</sup> Their 2012 review concluded that considerable efforts are still needed to achieve the MDGs in Ghana; it also raised concerns about the lack of accurate data.</p>

<sup>27</sup> Ghana Official Development Assistance, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2011, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/GHA.gif>

<sup>28</sup> Ghana, The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>

<sup>29</sup> 2008 Ghana Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010, National Development Planning Commission and United Nations Development Programme, [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Ghana/ghana\\_april2010.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Ghana/ghana_april2010.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> The bilateral agencies of Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK, plus the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank

<sup>31</sup> CSO Monitoring Report on Ghana's Progress on MDGs, Ghana Civil Society Monitoring Campaign, 2008

<sup>32</sup> The ten regions of Ghana are further divided into 216 districts, where local district assemblies have responsibility for local administrative matters

The above comparison suggests that the views of CSOs and the government are not far apart on any goal, although the government usually presents a slightly more optimistic view than the CSOs. In addition to this review process, the 2008 CSO Monitoring Report on Ghana's Progress on MDGs (2008) from the Ghana Civil Society Monitoring Campaign stated 'it seems highly unlikely that Ghana would meet most of the MDGs by 2015'.<sup>31</sup> Importantly, it indicated that even if current rates of progress were merely maintained, only a small number of targets would be reached for the whole country. The report further pointed out that, despite efforts to expand coverage of social interventions, real access remained patchy, with significant pockets of communities and districts<sup>32</sup> lagging behind the picture of progress portrayed by national aggregate statistics.

Indeed, CSOs in this review point out that the headline figures mask considerable geographical inequalities, with the three northern regions (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) remaining the poorest areas of Ghana. These areas are more rural and receive less rain than the southern regions. According to the 2008 CSO report, more than 70 per cent of people with incomes far below the poverty line are found in these three northern regions.

Income inequality is another persisting issue. The Gini Index, where 0 represents perfect equality and 100 implies perfect inequality, has increased from 40.8 in 1998 to 42.8 in 2006, suggesting a slight increase in inequality over time.<sup>33</sup>

For a full list of the MDGs, along with the targets and indicators, see:  
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/host.aspx?Content=indicators/officialist.htm>

### 3. Usefulness and challenges of the MDG framework to civil society

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CSOs involved in this review attest that they have found the MDG framework useful and suggest that evidence of this can be seen in the high degree of organisation and work by CSOs around the MDGs.

CSOs consulted consider that the value of the MDGs has been partly in having a common reference point and framework that can bring together actors across various fields. An example below discusses how a desire to focus on the MDGs has sparked the forging of new, broad-based civil society coalitions. While Ghana's national development frameworks have existed alongside the MDGs for some time, an aspect of the added value of the MDGs has been their status as a global agreement, something that the government has been keen to demonstrate it takes seriously, and which has also enabled comparison and benchmarking with other sub-Saharan African countries.

CSOs also consider that the MDGs have given added legitimacy to the work of CSOs, and have provided a platform for enhanced engagement with government. The MDGs have similarly offered a platform for engaging with international organisations, which CSOs report as having been useful for stimulating co-operation and funding.

CSOs, however, feel that donor funding has often driven the civil society agenda, compelling CSOs to focus on the priority areas of the funding agencies. While the assessment of CSO participants in this review of CSO-donor relations was broadly positive, the danger is that a donor-driven agenda will lead to the neglect of other important areas, including monitoring and tracking MDG targets that do not coincide with donors' core areas, and important issues that relate to the MDGs, but fall outside the target areas. For example, on education, CSOs receiving funding tend to focus on access and gender parity, but tend not to address the important issue of quality of education.

A trend that has occurred over the past few years is of donors pooling resources, particularly to support CSO research and advocacy work. The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) was cited by CSOs in this review as one such positive example of donors pooling funds for civil society, with resources coming from British (DfID), Canadian (CIDA), Danish (DANIDA) and Dutch (the Netherlands Embassy) bilateral donors to support CSOs working on pro-poor public policy research and advocacy. G-RAP was initiated in 2005 and was succeeded in 2011 by the Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-Ghana) programme, which provides funding

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<sup>33</sup> Gini Index, World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?page=1>



to increase the influence of CSOs and parliament in the governance of public goods and service delivery. It has supported CSOs working in various fields, including education, gender and health. This new group includes the European Commission and USAID as donors, although CIDA and the Dutch Embassy have now ended their support.

While donors have provided resources for the strengthening of CSO capacities to increase their efforts to achieve the MDGs, CSOs report that they appear reluctant to provide a sufficient level of resources to enable CSOs to play their watchdog role to its full extent. Other challenges to CSOs playing an oversight role include the lack of right to information legislation in Ghana and the problem of out-dated and delayed information, discussed below. CSOs consulted believe there has been some improvement in the capacity of CSOs to undertake policy advocacy, but there is still a challenge in the utilisation of the policy spaces available to CSOs to influence change.

CSOs also see that there is limited public awareness of the MDGs, contributing to a lack of a demand-driven approach. Factors that limit CSOs' ability to play a bigger role in the achievement of the MDGs include the lack of predictability of funding, especially for small CSOs; their vulnerability to loss of donor support; limited institutional capacity; continuing fragmentation and lack of networking, and an insufficiently enabling environment. CSOs consulted fear that due to the global financial and Eurozone crises, with many of Ghana's major donors based in the EU, funding for the MDGs is becoming more unreliable, and this could negatively impact on CSOs' work on the MDGs. CSOs believe this has been exacerbated by Ghana's attainment of middle-income status,<sup>34</sup> in response to which they fear that funding for the work of CSOs will dwindle.

Data collection is another challenge identified by CSOs in relation to the MDG framework. While statistical data may be accurate, time lags are a serious issue in a fast-changing country, with some data up to three years old before it is published. Indeed, old data was a problem in relation to many of the data sources consulted for this review. This has also given cause to CSOs to complain about the poor targeting of MDG-related interventions, when resources are sometimes channelled to areas where there is no urgent need, whether because of interventions based on old data or political expediency. It is therefore difficult to accurately assess progress towards some MDG indicators. The high level of aggregation of the MDG data can also present a skewed picture, given the inequalities outlined above, although rural/urban disaggregation at least has now been introduced.

<sup>34</sup> The World Bank currently classes Ghana as a lower-middle-income country. Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>

## 4. Contribution of CSOs to the MDGs and their delivery

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Some of the main roles CSOs play in helping to realise the MDGs in Ghana, as identified by this review, are as follows:

- Complementing the role of the state in the delivery of basic services, such as in health protection and care, education, water and sanitation
- Finding and leveraging sources of financing and human resources for development, either as recipients or as funding channels at national and local level
- Supporting and facilitating local development and self-help in partnership with local authorities and actors
- Influencing policy in support of democratic governance and accountability at national and local level. This includes:
  - Raising public awareness of citizens' rights
  - Empowering communities and groups to participate in public policy through strengthening social mobilisation and the people's voice in democratising local and national development
  - Facilitating co-operation and collaboration with national and local government authorities and other development actors and organisations
  - Promoting demand-driven accountability and supporting monitoring of government and donor policies and practices

Awareness-raising strategies offered by CSOs relevant to the MDGs include community radio talks, durbars – community discussions, educational forums and interactive forums and theatres. A key campaign strategy adopted by the Ghana Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs (see below) has been to use, as far as possible, existing groups and structures, while creating new ones around existing organisations that already work with other groups or networks, and strengthening them through training and involvement in project activities. There are also specific coalitions or networks that focus on particular goals, including on health, sanitation, trade effectiveness, education and gender issues.

The review put forward several examples of successful advocacy initiatives related to the MDGs, often utilising a coalition or platform approach. For example, the Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) is a sectoral coalition working in partnership with other actors in water and sanitation to influence policies, remove barriers and promote access to potable water, sanitation and improved hygiene for the poor and vulnerable, relevant to Goal 7. Its partners include funders such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WaterAid Ghana, and it works closely with various ministries, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) and other key actors.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> CONIWAS, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, <http://www.irc.nl/page/47546>



In a different sphere, the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) is a network of CSOs, professional groupings, educational and research institutions and other practitioners interested in promoting quality basic education for all. It is premised on the fact that education is a fundamental human right and key to breaking the cycle of poverty. Since 2008 it has been monitoring the rural/urban divide in terms of allocation, distribution and utilisation of education resources committed as part of Goal 2, and has used its findings to campaign for the government to reprioritise and reach educationally deprived districts.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, the Essential Social Services Platform, a grouping hosted by ISODEC, has used targets set by the African Union as a basis for advocacy towards the government to commit resources to the achievement of MDG targets in education, health and agriculture. This has had some impact on education, with more resources now going to school infrastructure development. Research by ISODEC into the reasons why children who receive scholarships do not stay in school, including because of employment and family care roles, also informed the introduction and growth of the capitation grant.

CSOs were active in advocating for the passage of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 and in sensitising citizens about the law once it came into force. The National Coalition on Domestic Violence legislation brought together over 100 CSOs, and two of its members, the Federation of Women Lawyers and Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa drafted the bill. The coalition worked constructively with the government to win parliamentary support and also liaised with Nigerian CSOs that had been through a similar process.

As well as service delivery and research and advocacy work, several Ghanaian CSOs have undertaken work on tracking budgetary resources allocated to the MDGs. This involves research and data gathering, monitoring resource flows, expenditures and target indicators, and the provision of feedback and recommendations to support policy advocacy and exposure of inefficiency. For example, CSOs suggest that the tracking of expenditure by CSOs such as the Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation has helped create a greater sense of urgency about the need to put in place stronger systems and oversight mechanisms such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI),<sup>37</sup> the Financial Administration Act and its Regulations<sup>38</sup> and other laws that seek to enhance financial transparency and accountability, particularly with regard to MDG-related interventions.

CSOs are also strongly represented on the various committees that work on different thematic areas of the MDGs. This is felt to be particularly the case in the health sector, where there is always a strong CSO presence in the various committees and meetings, although this raises the challenge of CSOs having the necessary capacity to effectively use this space and make the most of their opportunities to have an input.

<sup>36</sup> GNECC, <http://gnecc.org/new/about-us>

<sup>37</sup> The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2002. It encourages government, extractive companies, international agencies and CSOs to work together to develop a framework to promote transparency of payments in the extractive industries. The EITI seeks to create transparency and accountability in revenue flows from the extractive industry. Source: Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GEITI), [http://www.geiti.gov.gh/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=55](http://www.geiti.gov.gh/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=55)

<sup>38</sup> The Financial Administration Act was implemented in 2003. It aims to regulate the financial management of the public sector in order to ensure the effective and efficient management of revenue, expenditure, assets, liabilities and government resources (Financial Administration Act, 2003, Act 654, The Republic of Ghana)

## 5. In focus: MDGs as a stimulus to coalition-building

Ghanaian CSOs believe that there are some good examples of partnerships and collaborative work on the MDGs. One such initiative, the Ghana Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs, is now well-established, having been launched in 2004 under the SEND Foundation's Grassroots Economic Literacy and Advocacy Programme (GELAP) to monitor progress towards the attainment of the MDGs. The coalition's members include international CSOs such as ActionAid Ghana, SNV-Netherlands, Oxfam and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), together with national, regional and district CSOs such as the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) and the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR). SEND-Ghana hosts the technical secretariat and the Christian Council of Ghana hosts the national secretariat. An umbrella wing of the coalition is the District Citizens Monitoring Committees that currently operate in some districts of Ghana.

The campaign's objective is to build Ghanaian citizens' capacities to hold government to account for the delivery of the MDGs. This is based in the belief that knowledge and information about the MDGs among Ghanaian citizens is generally low, so that they are unlikely to make reasonable demands on the government to deliver on the MDGs and to join community level processes on MDG achievement. Activities include participatory monitoring and evaluation of each of the eight MDGs, and organisation of an MDG week each year to raise awareness.

Seven platforms have been designated as focal points on different MDGs, as follows:

**Table 2: MDG roles in the Ghana Civil Society Coalition**<sup>39</sup>

Name of platform	MDGs covered	Lead organisation
Food span	1	ActionAid Ghana
Education	2	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
Gender	3	Women in Law and Development
Health	4, 5, 6	Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights
Water, sanitation and environment	7	Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation
Trade, aid and debt	8	Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation of West Africa
Youth	Cross-cutting	Youth Empowerment Summit (YES) Ghana
Disability	Cross-cutting	Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD)

While these CSOs have taken their roles seriously, the coalition acknowledges that more needs to be done and many more CSOs need to be brought into the platform to increase effectiveness. For example, governance is an important cross-cutting issue, especially given high levels of corruption. There is therefore understood to be a need to reach out more to CSOs, particularly national level CSOs, such as GII, the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC).

The Ghana Civil Society Coalition on the MDGs' first campaign was to carry out independent monitoring in three districts in three different ecological zones. Its monitoring programme grew, and in 2008 coalition partners SEND Foundation and the ARHR jointly produced Ghana's first independent civil society MDG Monitoring Report, which they have used as a platform to try to influence government policies and actions on the MDGs. District Citizens Monitoring Committees are now established in 50 districts. The campaign also sourced funding to implement district level strategies on the MDGs, including research on the local level implications of the MDGs. CSOs in this review, however, felt that much more still needs to be done by the coalition to mobilise public opinion.

## 6. Lessons learned and recommendations

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To enhance the contribution of CSOs towards achieving the MDGs, it will be necessary to build their capacity to understand and identify the most effective social policies, entry points and interventions to increase progress towards the MDGs.

In addition, it is felt that the research capacities of CSOs need to be strengthened so that they can undertake more research into MDG-related interventions, in order to improve the effectiveness of those interventions and undertake evidence-based advocacy. The review identified the need for CSOs to develop skills for preparing policy briefs, when these are lacking, and for engaging parliament and improving media outreach, for advocacy and awareness-raising.

From CSOs' experience of working on the MDGs as outlined above, it is also clear that networking and collaboration yield better advocacy impact than individual organisational efforts. There remains a need to strengthen coalitions for still stronger co-ordination between CSOs, not least to eliminate duplication of efforts, and there is a need to build better linkages between CBOs and national level policy advocacy CSOs in order to improve the capacities for CBOs to engage with local authorities.

These key capacity development areas will of course need donor support. As part of this, it is suggested that government commitment to an independent funding mechanism specifically for CSOs working on the MDGs would help to bring about more effective civil society engagement on the MDGs, and strengthen partnerships between CSOs and the government.

In addition, attention must be paid to the enabling environment for civil society, so that CSOs can carry out their proper role in the exercise of accountability. In this regard, it is suggested that the passage of a Right to Information Bill is needed. Such a law would allow CSOs to obtain the necessary information to monitor how funds are used on MDG-related programmes, offer evidence-based advocacy and participate properly in development planning.

CSOs involved in this review also suggest that there should also be a reprioritisation of issues addressed in the MDG framework, with a specific focus on those targets that are lagging behind. The government and donors should commit additional resources to these under-performing areas. CSOs should then target collaboration between themselves, and inter-sectoral co-operation, to make a special effort to address these themes. Geographical areas that are identified as lagging behind national averages should also be identified.

Data needs to be updated and released more quickly so that it reflects more realistically what is currently happening in communities, and so that it guides interventions and oversight better. There is also a need for more disaggregated data. It is suggested that CSOs and research institutes should take part in data collection.

Regardless of the goals, the acceleration of progress will need stronger accountability. As part of this, and to address the challenge of imbalances within Ghana, it is suggested that there is a need to strengthen sub-national structures, including district assemblies, so that they can play a larger role on the MDGs. This should include better usage and oversight of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), which provides funds for basic social services, mainly in health, education, water and sanitation. A local focus would also give sub-national CSOs an opportunity to play an enhanced role. There is also a need for the increased representation of women in district assemblies, not only to speed up progress towards gender equality, but also because they are often closest to an understanding of development needs at household level.

## 7. Post-2015 development framework

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Discussions on any post-2015 development framework should start with an analysis of the present MDG agenda and its underlying approach, and an assessment of what has worked and not worked. Any development framework for post-2015 must also take into account how the context for development has changed since the MDGs were agreed. It will need to consider a global and African context of climate change and environmental vulnerability, price volatility and the food and energy crises this can cause, the changing nature of global governance and power balances, patterns of inequalities between and within countries, and trends relating to technology, demography, urbanisation and migration.

It is clear that CSOs involved in this review see a need for continuing work even after targets are achieved, as most targets, for example for the eradication of poverty, are not set at 100 per cent. This means that even if the MDGs are achieved, more work is needed. Interventions need to make use of the lessons learned from current efforts and ensure that progress made so far is not reversed. There is also a need to make additional efforts to address neglected areas where targets will not have been met.

Some CSOs consulted cautioned against the adoption of new frameworks and jargon to replace the current MDGs, since awareness about the MDGs has been established with many CSOs. The consensus from this review seems to be that there will be a need for a further decade's work on the MDGs. This must include the creation of a more enabling environment to support the implementation of new and extended interventions, including in advocacy, and strengthening the capacities that have already been developed.

From the CSO perspective, the current MDGs largely cover the key thematic areas in which development is needed. There is, however, a need to focus them on equity issues, backed by disaggregated data. There is also a need to design new indicators to measure progress in infrastructural development, while mechanisms to deal with governance gaps should complement the MDGs.

## 8. Conclusion

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Since 2005, Ghana has clearly made some progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, but much remains to be done, not only to achieve the goals, but to go beyond them to address additional challenges that were not included or where the targets were too modest. It must be understood that efforts towards poverty reduction are linked to changing the lack of access to quality education and health services, as well as to improving poor sanitation and unhealthy environmental practices. There is, therefore, a need for a continuous process on all these fronts. Ghana needs not only to continue with the interventions that it has put in place to achieve the MDGs by 2015, but to expand and add interventions that will bring change beyond.

It is also necessary to improve reach across the country and address inequality. This means that everyone must be involved in consultations on the post-2015 period, including civil society and the most voiceless and marginalised in society.

## Participating organisations

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### Original research partner:

- Ghana Integrity Initiative

### Interviewees:

- ActionAid Ghana
- Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights
- Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
- Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation Ghana
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ghana
- Water and Sanitation Monitoring Platform, Ministry of Water Resources, Work and Housing
- Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)

### Consultation partners:

- Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD)
- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

### Consultation participants:

- Accra Polytechnic
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
- Association of NGOs in Central Region
- Centre For Development Partnership
- Christian Mothers' Association
- Earth Service
- Environmental Protection Association of Ghana
- Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD)
- Ghana Integrity Initiative
- Green Earth Organisation
- Human Environment Provision Organisation
- Human Services Trust
- Institute of Micro Finance
- Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC)
- Kids and Single Parents Care Foundation
- Muslim Relief Association of Ghana
- National Union of Environmental NGOs
- Network for Health and Relief Foundation
- Public Agenda
- Social Engineering Development Associates



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